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PROMOTION, PROTECTION AND RESTORATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS AT NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LEVELS

PREVENTION OF DISCRIMINATION AND PROTECTION OF CHILDREN: HUMAN RIGHTS AND YOUTH

Final report on human rights and youth, submitted by Mr. Dumitru Mazilu, Special Rapporteur

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Introduction

1. The Commission on Human Rights, in its resolution 1985/13 of 11 March 1985, emphasized the necessity to ensure full enjoyment by youth of the rights stipulated in all relevant international instruments as indispensable for human dignity and the free development of the human personality, and requested the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to pay due attention to the role of youth in the field of human rights, particularly in achieving the objectives of the International Youth Year. At its thirty-eighth session, the Sub-Commission, in resolution 1985/12, referring, inter alia, to Commission resolution 1985/13, requested Mr. Dumitru Mazilu to prepare a report on human rights and youth analysing the efforts and measures for securing the implementation and enjoyment by youth of human rights, particularly the right to life, education and work, in order to facilitate the Sub-Commission's discussion on the topic. The Sub-Commission requested the Secretary-General to provide all necessary assistance to the Special Rapporteur for the completion of his task.

2. The Commission on Human Rights, at its forty-third session, adopted resolution 1987/44 in which it took note with appreciation of Sub-Commission resolution 1985/12 and requested the Secretary-General to provide all necessary assistance to the Special Rapporteur.

3. The report on Human Rights and Youth was to be presented to the thirty-ninth session of the Sub-Commission, originally scheduled for August 1986. Pursuant to General Assembly decision 40/472 of 9 May 1986 and due to the financial crisis of the United Nations, the thirty-ninth session of the Sub-Commission was postponed until 1987. The Special Rapporteur was, however, unable to submit his report at that time, having been put under house arrest by the Ceausescu Government until the December 1989 revolution. In spite of this, the first version of the report was submitted in April 1988.

4. An updated report (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1990/45 and Corr.1) was submitted to the Sub-Commission at its forty-second session. A progress report (E/CN.4/Sub.2/1991/42) was submitted to the Sub-Commission at its forty-third session. Taking into account the suggestions made by the members of the Sub-Commission and in conformity with his mandate, the Special Rapporteur now presents the final version of the report on human rights and youth. Useful information was received from many Governments, from United Nations agencies and in particular from ILO and UNESCO, from the Youth Forum of the United Nations System, from the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs and from non-governmental organizations. The Special Rapporteur would like to express his appreciation to the Social Development Division of the United Nations Office at Vienna, to Amnesty International and to Quaker United Nations Office, Geneva for their cooperation.

5. The Special Rapporteur expresses his profound gratitude to all members of the Sub-Commission who helped him during the years of his detention, in writing his critical report on violations of human rights in his country, and especially to Madame Erika-Irene Daes, Mr. Leandro Despouy, Mr. Asbjørn Eide, Mr. Marc Bossuyt, Mr. John Carrey and El Hadji Guissé.

6. Also, he expresses his appreciation for the help given by the International Court of Justice in December 1989.

7. Without this sincere help and support, the Special Rapporteur is aware that he could not have fulfilled his mandate.

I. YOUNG PEOPLE IN TODAY'S WORLD

A. Young people: a readily identifiable group

8. Young people constitute a readily identifiable group with a distinctive perspective on life, a discernible culture, and an important contribution to make to the progress and development of society. Young people have common needs and common interests.

9. There is no universally agreed definition of youth. However, for statistical purposes, the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations defines persons between the ages of 15 and 24 years of age as youth. Some specialists consider youth to be persons between the ages of 14 and 28. The chronological definition varies from nation to nation and from culture to culture.

10. The world youth population is estimated to be more than 1,000 million worldwide: 177 million in developed countries and 845 million in developing countries. Slightly less than half of the youth population is female. In 1990, 19.5 per cent of the world population was below 24 years of age. In developing countries youth account for 20.7 per cent of the total population as against 14.7 per cent in developed countries.

11. This population is projected to approach the 1,050 million mark by the year 2000. The number of young people from less developed countries is estimated to increase to approximately 885 million by the year 2000. This situation is in direct contrast to the projected change in the population of young people in the more developed countries, which is expected to decline in absolute terms.

12. Young people are more likely to live in urban areas than the rest of the population. This tendency is considered to be a reflection of the migration of young people from rural to urban areas for employment, education and other opportunities. It is observed in both more developed regions (79 per cent for youth versus 73 per cent for the total) and less developed regions (37 per cent for youth versus 32 per cent for the total).

13. On the analysis of the Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations, an assessment of the global economic situation and its regional manifestations indicates the tenuous position of many young people. The general economic situation and specific demographic trend underline the necessity of utilizing the vast potential of youth.

14. Young people occupy a unique social position. They are active agents of the process of social change and they often suffer as a result of it.

15. Many of their attitudes and values derive from problems which they encounter and their membership in other social groupings, groupings based on social class, gender, ethnicity, religion and culture. To this extent, their experience and their interests diverge. Youth policy should endeavour to ensure equal opportunity and accommodate these twin perspectives.

16. In any community, in different degrees, young people encounter difficult problems which derive not from their own inadequacies nor in many cases from those of their education, but from changing economic situations, rapid technological change, the application of inefficient economic theories, rapid growth of armaments, etc.

17. On the basis of ILO study, although the socio-economic situation of young people differs widely from country to country, at the same time, there are important similarities. One common characteristic among youth is the drive to become integrated into society, and an important measure of that integration is the world of work. It is well known that this world has come under increasing strain as the global economic fabric has become tightened under the pressure of recession, industrial restructuring and, especially in developing countries, deteriorating terms of trade, balance-of-payment problems and external debt.

18. The full participation of youth in the life of a nation is important for the achievement of social justice and the attainment of objectives of national development. In spite of that, it has become increasingly evident that far too many young people have been left at the margin of society. In many countries, young people are on the periphery of the major political, economic and social structures. Of course, the degree of marginalization differs according to the national context, but its severity would appear to be greatest in developing countries, where many young people live in extremely precarious conditions. Whereas some young people continue to have serious difficulties in finding a job, especially in the more developed countries.

19. Experience has shown that young people who are marginalized are poor, have had little exposure to education and training, often lack access to productive employment and may be socially and economically unassimilated. Many young people are facing the grave political, economic, social and cultural problems. Because of some forms of social and racial discrimination, in some countries youth cannot participate actively in the decision-making process.

20. Social problems such as alcohol and drug abuse and juvenile delinquency are linked to marginalization although the cause and effect is not easily determined. Any effort directed at integrating young people into society must take into account these and similar problems. Young people continue to live in poverty, suffer from squalor, disease and illiteracy and thus lead a subhuman existence, constituting in itself a denial of human dignity.

21. There is an ever-widening gap between the standards of living of young people in the economically developed and in the developing countries. It is recognized that universal enjoyment of rights and fundamental freedoms by young people will remain a pious hope unless the international community succeeds in narrowing this gap.

22. We have to recognize the collective responsibility of the international community to ensure the attainment of the minimum standard of living necessary for the enjoyment of their rights and fundamental freedoms by young people throughout the world.

23. The universal enjoyment of their economic, social and cultural rights by young people depends to a very large degree on the rapid economic and social development of developing countries, which are inhabited by approximately 755 million of the world's population of young people, whose lot continues to deteriorate as a result of tendencies which characterize international economic relations.

24. Analysis has shown that 44 years after the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the life, liberty and security of young people in many countries, including my own, continue to be in danger.

25. Young people, like all human beings, have an inherent right to life. The safeguarding of this cardinal right is an essential condition for the enjoyment of the entire range of economic, social and cultural, as well as civil and political rights, by the world's population of young people.

26. The responsibility for the normal development of young people should be shared by the whole community. In accordance with the principles proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations and in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, every young man and young woman has the right to enjoy civil and political freedom and freedom from fear and want. Everyone may enjoy his civil and political rights, as well as his economic, social and cultural rights.

27. All States have the obligation, under the Charter of the United Nations, to promote universal respect for, and observance of, human rights and freedoms.

28. The inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of young people, as members of the human family, are recognized by the Charter of the United Nations, by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, by many other important international documents and by the Constitution of States.

29. They should be fully observed. Unfortunately, in different countries they are very often violated. Why? For which reasons?

30. In the next chapters of this report, on the basis of information and observations received from Governments, the United Nations organs, specialized agencies, regional and other intergovernmental organizations, and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, we will try to answer these fundamental questions.

B. The right of young people to freedom and dignity

31. The young people of the world can hold up their heads with pride, conquer unimagined heights of culture and universal civilization and develop harmoniously in full physical and intellectual health only if they live in freedom and dignity.

32. Petrarch and Boccaccio, Rabelais and Montaigne, Sir Thomas More and Francis Bacon, Miron Costin and Dimitri Cartemir, Lev Tolstoi, Anatole France, Rabindranath Tagore, Thomas Mann, Jean-Paul Sartre, Bertrand Russell; all the great thinkers of the world have demonstrated that man represents the supreme

value, that the human being has limitless possibilities of development, that the human personality is harmonious and victorious. René Cassin points out that freedom and equality are the greatest conquests of human society, while André Malraux notes that slavery and repression are the products of barbarism, whereas freedom is the fruit of human civilization. All the enlightened minds of the world, the great universal writers, have made of their works a hymn to the glory of man, his freedom and his dignity.

33. Renowned political leaders have made a creed of protecting and guaranteeing human rights and freedoms and have subordinated their programmes of government to the attainment of these noble objectives. Nicolae Balcescu declares that the liberation of man is the most important aim of a democratic government. Winston Churchill observes that the structures of a society must ensure for people the full realization of their personality, while Charles de Gaulle notes that a political system takes hold and endures only if it offers the necessary guarantees of respect for people's fundamental rights and freedoms. Thus thinkers and politicians, the most enlightened personalities of all times, have given expression to a similar vision of the human being and of his rights and freedoms.

34. But if such a vision of man, of the place and role that are fitting for him in society, prevails both in thought and in practice, why ever should there be any need for a study, a report on human rights and youth? How is the importance of such a topic to be explained and why has the United Nations decided to address it?

35. In spite of humanist judgements of universal validity and national and international standards in force today, human rights and freedoms, including those of the younger generations, continue to be ignored and brutally violated.

36. Experience shows that nothing causes deeper traumas than the humilitation of a person, the violation of his rights and freedoms, placing and keeping him in a state of dependance, subordination, slavery. Lack of respect for a person for his preoccupations and worries, has grave effects not only on those concerned but also on those round about, setting its seal in particular on the psychology of the younger generations.

37. We find to our stupefaction that to this day skin colour continues to afford grounds for discrimination; that some races are still classified as superior and others as inferior; that ethnic origin is the source of certain inequalities; and that sex is still a criterion for differential treatment. Some dictators have unleashed, in the course of the years, racial persecution; they have undertaken abusive measures against national minorities, which have sooner or later generated ethnic conflicts accompanied by loss of life. In some countries a veritable cultural genocide has been set in train against minorities, in an attempt to destroy their spiritual traditions and assimilate them by force.

38. What gloom and anxiety have built up in the hearts of young people who, after studying for years and years, cannot find a secure job. According to studies made by the International Labour Office, there are more than 10 million

young people without jobs, and the prospect for the 1990s is that their numbers will exceed 15 million unless urgent measures are taken at the national and international level.

39. These young people have been robbed of their right to work. The forced labour of young people in assigned jobs at ridiculous pay, which does not help them to become integrated or encourage them to undergo training, produces indifference and even a blasé attitude among the majority of them.

40. How many people are spiritually mutilated before they have completed their studies, finding that the very values that form the foundations of a civilized society - honesty, truth and sincerity - have been abandoned in the face of the violent onslaught of falsehood and hypocrisy.

41. The annihiliation of talent and the process of levelling, carried on to the tune of a few political or "moral" slogans, are depriving society of the strengths which it needs as vitally as air and water in order to progress and develop. The individual's effort is dissolved in that of large groups of people, and those who make up such a group lose sight of the conclusions drawn by all the great sociologists of the world, who call attention to the fact that every human community has its peaks and only by providing incentives are others stimulated to try to reach them. This is a natural prerequisite for progress.

42. Repressive barbarity on account of political convictions has attained proportions that the most pitiless despots known to history would envy. For a young person who enlightens his spirit by reading Voltaire, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Montesquieu, Sartre or René Cassin and who takes cognizance of the content of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, it is incredible that in our times the barbaric repression fostered by a few tyrants can sow such tragedies in people's lives.

43. The younger generations are shaken to find that men called upon to ensure that justice is done on the basis of truth and right have sent hundreds of thousands of human beings to their deaths, knowing that they had done nothing wrong; that in camps and prisons people are murdered without trial by butchers appointed to keep watch on them; that, during the torture to which they are subjected on being questioned, thousands of detainees are horribly mutilated, while many prisoners of conscience lose their lives.

44. The younger generations are calling more and more insistently for guarantees that these odious deeds will never again be repeated, that human beings will never more be detained, tortured and killed for their political convictions, and that repressive barbarity will be eliminated forever from the political system of society.

45. The young people of the world can hold up their heads with pride, conquer unimagined heights of culture and universal civilization and develop harmoniously in full physical and intellectual freedom only if they live in freedom and dignity.

46. Humiliation breaks a man down; it destroys his personality.

47. Freedom and dignity give him wings; they raise him to the creative stature that history has conferred on him.

48. Freedom draws together people from everywhere, generates trust and understanding between human communities, and guarantees peace.

49. To assure and guarantee to the young people of the world their fundamental rights and freedoms is not a gift but an act of good will, an elementary duty of all rulers.

50. The leap into the realm of freedom presupposes an understanding of the need for progress and development. But progress and development are pursued successfully only with free people.

C. Important developments in different parts of the world

51. Over the last five years extremely important developments have taken place in various parts of the world, in particular in Eastern Europe.

52. By a true revolution the peoples of this area have decided to eliminate a totalitarian system, to restore democracy and to build a society based on respect for the freedom and dignity of every human being.

53. Some important changes have also taken place in other regions of the world. In Africa, Asia and Latin America, there have been major developments in the fight for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

54. At the same time numerous and serious problems persist in some countries, where human rights and fundamental freedoms continued to be violated.

55. Historically unverified and unconfirmed dogmas and the violation of the freedoms of thought and conscience have led to spiritual stagnation. Millions of believers in various countries have suffered humiliation and prosecution for their religious convictions; in bitterness, entire communities have responded by drawing closer together in their faith and in their spiritual communion. Proof of this is that precisely in those countries where anti-religious measures were multiplied, the number of believers has grown not only among older people but also among the young. Millions of young people nowadays take part in great religious processions, seeking answers to the many complex problems for which society has failed to give them a credible explanation.

56. Criteria of race, sex, language and religion are still the basis for a variety of inequitable and unfair measures. Similarly, ethnic considerations still constitute the motivation for deliberate acts of repression. The discrimination and measures of isolation directed against whole communities have caused indignation, rebellion and social conflict.

57. The disillusionment felt in certain sectors of society, in particular by the younger generation, has led to a growing use of narcotics. Drug consumption continues to take its toll of thousands of human lives. In the absence of any real happiness, young people take refuge in an unreal world, thus almost irreversibly destroying their own physical and moral health.

58. For many years dictators kept their peoples cordoned off within their national borders in order to prevent human contacts across frontiers and continents. This was a great disservice to civilization. The age-old spiritual values of humanity were officially discredited, while those who hold them were subjected and continue to be so in some countries, to unimaginable acts of repression. Instead of allowing the free circulation of ideas, values and traditions, there was an attempt, which continues in some countries, to impose dogmatic patterns of thought in a situation of national isolation. This leads to backwardness and even regression, depriving millions of people of the joys of progress and civilization.

59. Young people find the loud bombardment of lies and hypocrisy in some countries shocking. Compulsory labour has been instituted through a declaration of the freedom to work. At a time when poverty and destitution are assuming growing proportions, statistics have been manipulated and resounding claims to prosperity continue to be made. The most astounding and grave inequities are perpetrated in the name of justice.

D. Any assessment of the state of human rights should take account of the younger generation

60. Undoubtedly, no assessment of the state of human rights in the world would be complete if it did not take account of the younger generation.

61. In our analysis we consider that the following developments must be examined:

(a) A large proportion of young people do not enjoy the benefits of full participation and integration in the social and economic sectors of their countries because of unequal and inadequate access to opportunities, for example in education and employment, and limited support for their special situation in regard to family formation and health. Young women are especially likely to suffer from long-entrenched discrimination, practices and habits;

(b) Because of rapid growth in urban areas, as the result of both high birth rates and migration, there has been an enormous increase in the number of urban youth who live in extraordinarily precarious conditions in neighbourhoods that lack basic services, housing or security;

(c) Many difficulties are encountered in the transition of youth from education to employment, and from their situation as children to new roles as spouses and parents;

(d) Political leaders, we note, take great pains to include in their major declarations of intent a reference to their special concern for the younger generation. They try to convince us that their grandiose plans for self-aggrandizement are intended to achieve "happiness for the coming generations";

(e) A wealth of material and spiritual values was doomed to vanish, leading to the impoverishment of the culture and civilization of the peoples concerned and depriving the youth of their elementary right to be acquainted with the material vestiges of their past and with their spiritual heritage;

(f) Millions of young people in some countries continue to be deprived of the right to the enjoyment of their youth. Subjected to compulsory labour, to mistaken educational trends, young people tend to become spiritless robots, their only prospects being that of swelling the ranks of salaried slaves;

(g) In various countries, persistent joblessness has swelled the ranks of the disillusioned and the disoriented;

(h) Under both sets of circumstances many young people today have been robbed of the joys of youth, a time of life for fulfilment and achievement of which no adolescent should be deprived;

(i) Gradually many young people have become indifferent and listless. Feeling that they are being manipulated to ends that do not reflect their aspirations, many have become weary. They realize that what they are being told to do is not useful now, nor is it useful for the future. Without the joy of creativity, the young have lost their characteristic enthusiasm; a freely-chosen occupation, the source of the greatest social achievements, has been replaced by compulsory work;

(j) The cruelest blow to thousands upon thousands of young people has been that of being robbed of their right to a bright future. Economic structures that impede progress, institutional systems that spawn poverty and discourage efforts to improve one's lot, the savage and irrational exploitation of natural resources, severe environmental pollution, especially of air and water - all these deprive young people of prospects for a better future. Many do not see the appropriate way to improve the situation. The chaos caused by incompetence in various branches of the economy in some countries and the refusal to carry out reforms render necessary changes in the basic structure impossible. Robbed of their right to a better future, young people feel profoundly disillusioned, confused, discouraged and demotivated; they are amputated of that which should be their most precious possession; a joyful expectation of the future;

(k) The feeling of dissatisfaction and revolt among the young is all the greater as certain rulers impose their erroneous decisions, their faulty solutions and their inefficient economic organization precisely in the name of a better future for the younger generation;

(l) The ability of young people to contribute has been underestimated and neglected in the formulation of development programmes and in the identification and implementation of ways to achieve progress; the younger generation has been left out of the mainstream thus depriving society at large of an inestimable resource of creative thought and intelligence.

E. Youth as a positive force for development and social and political change

62. The active participation of youth should be recognized as a positive force for development, and social and political change. The effective participation of young people in society requires institutionalized barriers to that participation to be overcome, and practical action mobilized.

63. Young people have been astonished by the fact that millions of people think one thing but say something altogether different. They have asked what has produced this duplicity that throws discredit upon the human race.

64. In particular, young people have had the courage to ask how it has been possible to equate free thought and speech - universally recognized to be the finest achievements of mankind - with a criminal offence, when all the international instruments in this domain solemnly proclaim everybody's right to hold opinions and to freely express them.

65. Through a real revolution, young people, together with other segments of society, have demonstrated that in contrast to other living creatures man is the only one endowed with the power of reason, able to comprehend the objective world and to express judgements. Since conscious reflection is what sets him apart from the rest of the animal kingdom, to deny a human being the right to think and to express his thoughts means to negate his rightful historic role and to put him on a par with animals. Those who did and do this have committed and continue to commit the iniquity of iniquities.

66. Young people have been astonished to see that whole nations were reduced to a state of slavery, their only preoccupation being their physical survival. These unbelievable developments were and, alas, are still possible under certain deeply undemocratic regimes which cancelled at one stroke all the attainments of human civilization and distorted arbitrarily all human relationships, placing them under the dominion of suspicion and repression.

67. Today, after seven decades of ordeals, the issue of recognizing human rights has been raised, to enable people to freely express their opinions and thus to put the Stalinist nightmare behind them; this has been considered to be a great step forward.

68. However, people - primarily young people - manifest their firm determination to put an end to the nightmare produced by the rejection and the brutal violation of freedom and democratic rights. They demand respect for the rights of the human species conferred upon it by its very development: to be free and to live in freedom.

69. The revolution to which many of us have been witnesses has been a revolution of young people who have expressed their firm determination to change the world, to restore democracy and to live in freedom.

70. The problems that young people face, after all, are merely reflections of the problems of the larger society. In the 1990s, the major problem areas that affect young people globally are those concerning development, education and training, work, health, housing, family life, culture and environment. There is a serious problem of youth unemployment and underemployment. Far too many people's lives are characterized by an immense volatility of occupation and by the fact that they are often not fully integrated into the labour force.

71. Taking into account that young people are active agents of the process of social change, their cooperation is required in order to fulfil the objectives of this change. During this process it is extremely important to bear in mind the special situation of youth in developing countries, particularly the least developed.

II. DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE INCREASING NUMBER OF VIOLATIONS OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF YOUTH

72. The Commission on Human Rights has stressed the necessity of securing the full implementation and enjoyment by youth of the rights recognized by all important international instruments and to give due consideration to the role of youth in the field of human rights. In fact, these instruments provide guidelines and objective parameters not conditioned by local situations, thus making it possible to assess whether the fundamental rights of young people are safeguarded.

73. The answers, information and observations received from Governments, United Nations organs, specialized agencies, regional and other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council have stressed the grave political, economic, social and cultural problems facing youth in today's world, and the need to ensure the full exercise of youth's fundamental rights to life, education, vocational training, work and a standard of living adequate for health and well-being.

74. It has been indicated that youth is the sole component of society which is deprived of any direct representation of its own interests. A social policy for youth is necessarily a "filtered" policy, an asymmetric one, in which there is no dialectical confrontation between the concerned parties. Deep concern has been expressed about the increasing number of violations of the human rights of youth in some important sectors.

A. Life, liberty and security of youth

75. The life, liberty and security of young people are in danger in many parts of the world. Child abuse, the sale of children for adoption, the utilization of youth on behalf of adult offenders, the utilization of youth for pornographic films, all seem to be progressively increasing.

1. Summary or arbitrary executions

76. Of particular concern is the increasing number of summary or arbitrary executions, including of young people, in different parts of the world. A factor common to all the victims is that they were in opposition to, or were perceived or imagined to have been in opposition to, those who wielded political or economic power in the State or Government, or were perceived to be in opposition to certain aspects of their political, economic, social and cultural policies. Many young people have been arbitrarily executed during events such as demonstrations, strikes or other forms of protest. Summary or arbitrary executions of young people are most prevalent in areas where internal disturbances exist. Such executions have been carried out after a violent change of Government resulting from wars, internal armed conflicts, revolutions or coups d'état, or after attempts to change the Government by constitutional means had failed.

2. Enforced or involuntary disappearances

77. This reprehensible violation of the human rights of youth is a result of excesses on the part of law enforcement or security authorities or similar organizations and the resultant difficulty or impossibility of obtaining reliable information from competent authorities. Summary or arbitrary executions and enforced or involuntary disappearances, which involve plain and fundamental breaches of the most elementary human rights, have been generally regarded as being politically motivated. Disappearances have always been convenient for a powerful Government to silence its opponents by removing them. Disappearances directly affect the right of parents to know the fate of their children, the right of relatives to be informed of the whereabouts and fate of missing family members. For those who wield political or economic power in the State or Government, the repercussion are minimized if political opponents can be erased, without statements, trial or martyrdom.

78. Why are these methods used so often against young people by some Governments? The analysis of this situation has shown that young people are very courageous and much more decided to fight for liberty. For young people, liberty means everything; it is their life and their future.

79. Any dictatorship understands this fact very well. That is why it is ready to take every repressive measure to neutralize young people fighting for liberty. For any tyrant or dictator, summary or arbitrary executions and enforced or involuntary disappearances are most convenient. A tragic solution!

80. Since summary or arbitrary executions and enforced or involuntary disappearances are the most reprehensible and flagrant violations of the right to life of young people, we consider it necessary to collect further information focusing on these and other matters concerning youth. The question of summary or arbitrary executions and enforced or involuntary disappearances of young people is a matter of high priority, bearing in mind that deprivation of life is irrevocable.

3. Health and hunger

81. The life of young people is in danger in those countries where their right to adequate food and to a standard of living adequate for their health and well-being is not observed. Many young people, particularly in developing countries, suffer from hunger and malnutrition. We have noted with deep concern that in some countries political leaders have used food and medical care as an instrument of political pressure.

82. In conformity with information sent by the World Health Organization, the access of young people to medical care is far from satisfactory. And according to the estimate of FAO, in the 10 years preceding 1991 at least 55.5 million young people died of hunger, most of them in Africa and in the least developed countries.

83. The International Symposium on the integration of young people into society (Toledo, Spain, June 1990) underlined the fact that the reduction in the age of puberty and their increasingly early sexual experiences make adolescent boys and girls vulnerable to sexually transmitted diseases at a very early age, which may have negative effects on future fertility. The number of young people affected by such diseases has increased considerably during the past 10 years. They have spread among teenagers in both developed and developing countries. Young people are often ignorant about the symptoms of such diseases, which are difficult to identify, and are reluctant to seek help because they fear the anger and hostility of their families. In some countries this situation is aggravated by the lack of health facilities.

84. According to the Division for the Advancement of Women of the United Nations Office at Vienna, the factors linked to the reproductive role of young women and their subordinate position make them especially vulnerable to the HIV infection, the cause of Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome (AIDS). By the mid-1990s the number of women infected with HIV will be larger than the number of infected men. Estimations have shown that the majority of infected persons are below 25 years. Young women are most exposed to the transmission of the disease. They become infected at a younger age than men. Since 1987, the number of reported AIDS cases has increased considerably among teenagers. From a study carried out in Zaire, it appears that among young people aged 15 to 30 infection rates were four times higher for women than for men. Many young women do not know that they are infected. They could find out that only when infection is diagnosed during pregnancy or when giving birth.

85. From national studies carried out in various countries, it appears that in cultures where the value of the woman is determined by her fertility, an HIV-infected young woman may not question the decision to have a baby, even though there is a 25-30 per cent risk of a baby being infected.

86. Also, traditional practices such as female genital mutilations cause serious later health problems. The Working Group on Traditional Practices affecting the Health of Women and Children has drawn attention to the fact that female circumcision is a practice which menaces the health of about

75 million women and children. The young women can suffer from such complications as haemorrhage, infections, bleeding of adjacent organs and violent pain. They can also suffer adverse effects on their physical and psychological well-being.

87. According to the latest estimates of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations, each year, at least half a million women worldwide die from pregnancy-related causes, of whom roughly 200,000 die from illegal abortions, mostly performed by unskilled attendants under unsanitary conditions or self-inflicted.

88. Young people are often vulnerable to stresses that engender mental instability. According to the World Health Organization, most mental health problems appear for the first time during adolescence, although their origins may lie in earlier childhood.

89. After accidents, the second cause of mortality among young people is suicide. Rates of suicide among young men are higher than among young women, although rates of suicide attempts are higher among young women.

90. Rates of mortality among young people show a great disparity between the developed and developing countries. The main causes are linked to poor economic and social conditions, and in particular are a result of malnutrition. According to the latest estimates of FAO, every day in the least developed countries thousands of young boys and girls are dying of hunger. Higher rates of mortality among young people in developing countries are also linked to lack of health service facilities and personnel, especially in rural areas. Very poor transport networks do not allow easy access to medical care, which is often centred in cities.

4. Disabled youth

91. Statistics show that many disabled people are young. On the basis of information received, it is clear that in many, particularly developing, countries there is an increasing number of disabled young people. Every young person with a disability is, in a sense, impoverished. They must confront the most difficult problems in all aspects of daily life. The United States has adopted the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) which gives civil rights protection to individuals with disabilities. It guarantees equal opportunity in employment, public accommodation, transportation, state and local government services and telecommunications. Such rules and regulations should be promoted everywhere in the world as, for young disabled people in particular, they represent an important guarantee in their efforts to secure equal access in all fields of modern society.

92. The Ad Hoc Open-Ended Working Group to Elaborate Standard Rules on the Equalization of Opportunities at its second session (Vienna, May 1992) suggested a set of specific targets to be achieved within a definite time-frame. Between such targets has been included an annual increase of at least 10 per cent in the proportion of disabled boys and girls attending school. It also proposed a reduction by 50 per cent over the next years of the causes of avoidable impairments that lead to disability.

93. During the United Nations Decade of Disabled Persons awareness has been growing that physical "disability" is not about personal, but rather environmental deficiencies. Many studies at the national and international level have emphasized the contribution of young disabled persons to the changing mentality in this field. They have demonstrated practically that the accent should be on ability rather than disability, on integration rather than segregation, on fully developing potential rather than maintaining hurdles to development. The equalization of opportunity appears, consequently, to be essential for the environment to be acceptable to the people with disabilities. Disabled young people in many developed countries are actively participating in economic, social and cultural life. It has become clear that the physical environment, services, activities and information, together with other systems of society, should be made accessible to all, including the disabled.

94. It is unfortunate that in spite of these positive trends, too often young persons with disabilities are still denied equal opportunities. In many countries discriminatory practices continue to exist with respect to disabled persons. Some organizations representing disabled persons have emphasized cases of young disabled persons who failed to obtain the necessary support, particularly in developing countries. For this reason, many governmental, intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations consider the concept of equal rights as an inherent component of the equalization of opportunity.

5. Armed conflicts

95. The serious tensions on the international scene and the unprecedented and immensely costly acceleration of the arms race limit the opportunities to resolve certain acute economic and social problems facing many young people today.

96. We have to stress again that, to ensure the enjoyment by youth of the right to life, the international community must make every effort to strengthen peace, remove the growing threat of war, particularly nuclear war, to halt the arms race, to achieve general and complete disarmament under effective international control, and to prevent violations of the principles of the Charter of the United Nations regarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States and self-determination of peoples. In the recent past, the number of young victims of wars or other military conflicts, on conservative estimates, would be at least 3 million.

97. Dorothea E. Woods has emphasized in her report "Children at War in Africa", that at present youth under 18 are known to be included in the governmental armies of Chad, Somalia and Uganda and in bands subsidized by some Governments. Minors are in the liberation movements of Eritrea and Western Sahara. Minors make up a high percentage of the soldiers in Mozambique. The South Sudan Liberation Army also takes in minors. The soldiers of this liberation army have taken charge of the hunger of very young boys and have taught them to cultivate the soil as well as to fight. In Liberia, a lot of young people were displaced and their families killed. In Mozambique some 200,000 war orphans wandering about the bush have been at the mercy of the guerrilla bands. Most of the 10,000 young people captured have killed others so as to have food and clothing.

98. In Sudan, youth have been kidnapped by wandering bands armed by the Government, and also by the liberation army. In Mozambique the RENAMO army took by force about 90 of its soldiers, dragging them violently from their villages and shooting them if they attempted to escape. In the process of capture, many young people have been exposed to terrible happenings.

99. It is unfortunate that many boys learn how to kill another human being before they learn to read. Some boys fire guns they are scarcely big enough to handle.

100. The forced recruitment of young men and boys is an evident violation of human rights.

101. Taking into account these and other developments which have grave psychological and physical effects on the lives of young people, it is necessary to stop the use of children in armed conflicts and to recognize their right to object to military service and to refuse to kill.

6. Conscientious objection to military service

102. During the last four years, young people have succeeded in convincing some national authorities to recognize their right of conscientious objection to military service as a legitimate exercise of the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. In such countries, including Hungary and Poland, new rules and regulations have been adopted which recognize explicitly this right and offer young people the possibility of performing non-military alternative service.

103. Unfortunately, in many countries the recommendations contained in Commission on Human Rights resolution 1989/59 continue not to be applied, and persons who object to military service for reasons of conscience are routinely imprisoned or forced into military service. In these countries, all conscripts who refuse to perform military service are tried before a military tribunal and may be sentenced to up to three years' imprisonment. On the other hand, in some countries the duration of the alternative service appears to be punitive. For instance, in France conscripts are accepted for alternative civilian service in a state administration or in local organizations of a social or humanitarian nature, but the length of service is 24 months, twice that of ordinary military service. It is our firm view that alternative civilian service of a punitive duration is not an acceptable alternative.

104. On the basis of the resolution cited, all States should take appropriate steps to recognize the right of conscientious objection to military service as a legitimate right. Through appropriate laws and regulations, conscripts should have the right to claim conscientious objector status at any time, since the claim is an exercise of the fundamental right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion. In the view of Amnesty International,

> "a conscientious objector is understood to be a person liable to register for conscription for military service (even where there is no military service), who, for reasons of conscience or profound conviction arising

from religious, ethical, moral, humanitarian, philosophical, or similar motives refuses to perform armed service or any other direct or indirect participation in wars or armed conflicts".

According to the International Peace Bureau, many young people were compelled to participate in military conflicts in Afghanistan, El Salvador, Guatemala, Iran and Uganda. Thousands of them were taken prisoner. Many young people were killed in the armed conflict in Cambodia contrary to their convictions. According to an Amnesty International study published in January 1991 on the basis of analyses in Argentina, Austria, Bulgaria, China, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Germany, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Israel, Italy, Norway, Poland, Romania, Somalia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, USSR and Yugoslavia, there is an urgent need to recognize the right of everyone to refuse to kill.

105. It is encouraging that during the last two years some Governments have taken action regarding the question of conscientious objection to military service. In Argentina, the Military Service Act (No. 17,531) makes provision for a large number of possible grounds for exemption, which, to judge by the numerous bills submitted, is constantly growing. This group includes persons who apply to be declared unfit on health grounds and those who belong to recognized religious sects or groups and who claim to be seminarists or ministers of their religion. In Belgium, within one month of the date of receipt, the local authorities prepare a file, which they transmit to the Minister of the Interior, who either takes a decision to grant the applicant conscientious objector status or, if he considers that he is unable to take favourable action on the application, transmits it to the Council of Conscientious Objection, which takes a decision. In Canada, the legislation enacted for national service contains provisions for conscientious objectors either to perform alternative forms of service or to perform non-combatant service in the military forces. Chad accepts and recognizes conscientious objection to military service, although conscientious objectors are subject to some conditions. In the Republic of the Philippines, objections on grounds of conscience include sincere belief founded on religion and genuine personal convictions that one should not kill or take away life under any circumstance. In Spain, Royal Decree No. 20/1988 is in force, approving the regulations relating to social service by conscientious objectors. In Sweden there are possibilities for persons liable for military service to perform non-combatant service instead of military service. In 1973, the United States abolished conscription and adopted an all-volunteer military service system.

106. In spite of this positive trend, during the past two years many young people have been compelled to participate in military conflicts in different regions of the world, including Europe. Not all States respect the right to conscientious objection to military service and those persons who refuse service are imprisoned or otherwise punished. More alarming are the frequent reports of forced conscription through kidnapping and street round-ups. Many of those forcibly recruited are young boys under the age of conscription.

107. For these reasons, it is urgent for all States to respect the right to conscientious objection to military service. More than that, States should also recognize the right of an individual to be released from the armed forces on grounds of conscience.

7. Drug abuse

108. The life of many young people is in danger in different countries because of the continuing increase in the use of illicit drugs. Young people are frequently engaged or used in different aspects of the illicit drug business, including the production, possession, trafficking, demand and consumption of illicit drugs. The immediate consequences are massive social and human problems and harmful effects on the physical and moral health of the young population. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Colombia has reported that in spite of special measures taken by the Government, many young people continue to be victims of the abuse of narcotic drugs. On the basis of information received, in the world today at least 14 million young people are victims of the abuse of narcotic drugs and psychotropic substances and more than 5 million are engaged or used in different aspects of the illicit drug business, while about 17.5 million are victims of alcoholism. The extent and occurrence of the abuse of narcotic drugs or alcohol during the 20 years preceding 1991 may have been even more widespread, since not all cases were reported. According to Amnesty International, in Colombia,

> "against a background of continuing civil conflict and extensive drug-related violence, government forces, sometimes operating in alliance with drug-traffickers, and paramilitary groups under their command continue to commit widespread and systematic human rights violations".

109. The International Symposium on the Integration of Young People into Society (Toledo, Spain, June 1990) emphasized that the abuse of illicit drugs is largely a male problem. At the same time it was noted that the proportion of young women abusing drugs is growing. Young women drug abusers suffer more personal stress, depression and anxiety and show a lower level of self-esteem than male drug abusers. Many studies carried out at the national level, indicate that young women opiate addicts had more physical and psychological problems in school, at work and in their families even before addiction. According to a study by the Division for the Advancement of Women, personal and social disfunction results from drug abuse and the health and even the survival of any children born during or after drug abuse is endangered.

110. Most studies at the national and the international level show that young people who abuse drugs commit crimes. There is a close relationship between drugs and violence.

111. In view of the extremely grave consequences of drug abuse for the physical and moral health of young people, and for every human being, many national and international organizations consider it necessary to consider the illicit drug business, including the production, possession, trafficking, demand, consumption and financing of illicit drugs, as a crime against humanity.

8. Young women victims of trafficking and involuntary prostitution

112. Forced prostitution is a form of slavery imposed on young women by procurers.

113. Trafficking and involuntary prostitution are, inter alia, a result of economic degradation that alienates young women's labour through processes of rapid urbanization and migration that result in underemployment and unemployment.

114. Social and political pressures produce refugees and missing persons. Often these include vulnerable groups of young women who are victimized by procurers.

115. Sex tourism, forced prostitution and pornography reduce young women to mere sex objects and marketable commodities.

116. In some countries of Asia, in particular Thailand, and in some countries of Latin America, such as Brazil and Mexico, very young girls, many of them under 15, are forced to become prostitutes. In these countries and in many others, forced prostitution and trafficking in young women for the purposes of prostitution have become a highly profitable business, not only at the national but even at the international level.

117. International sex tourism is associated with the power of men from rich countries to purchase sexual services from poor young women in developing countries. This adds an international dimension to the spread of HIV infection. Prostitutes are not solely responsible for its spread. But young women who are dependent economically on prostitution have no other choice than to risk infection. Otherwise, they lose their means of survival for themselves and their children. There is an increasing risk of HIV infection being introduced into previously uninfected populations through such kind of prostitutes.

118. For these reasons, urgent consideration should be given to the improvement of national and international measures to combat trafficking in young women for the purposes of prostitution. Strict enforcement provisions must be taken at all levels to stem the rising tide of violence, drug abuse and crime related to prostitution.

119. The complex and serious problems of exploitation of and violence against young women associated with prostitution call for increased and coordinated efforts by police agencies internationally.

9. Juvenile justice

120. The administration of justice in the case of young offenders is very important for the full enjoyment by youth of the right to life. In the view of some members of the Board of the International Society of Social Defence (ISSD), a penal sanction affecting juveniles is meaningless if it does not aim at the social reintegration, education, professional training and

rehabilitation of the offender, the sanction as such being secondary. Recourse to detention for an indefinite period, sometimes adopted even for unusual behaviour not involving any breach of the penal law, is today considered contrary to human rights.

121. The administration of juvenile justice plays a very important role in the protection of human rights if it recognizes that the minor has his own rights and if it succeeds in combining the need for protection and the need for guarantees. Present trends aim to restrict the detention of minors to the most severe cases and to consider detention as the ultima ratio, developing instead alternative measures which, while reacting to the offence, do not deprive the person of his liberty. Modern penal law and the penal system for young people aim at overcoming any form of paternalistic intervention, keeping however the peculiarity of a system which, with legal guarantees, pursues above all an educational and social action and places the interests of juveniles in the forefront.

122. Many Governments have adopted measures which provide for the protection and care of young persons who are victims of abuse, abandonment and exploitation. In some countries, rules, regulations and procedures have been adopted which provide stiff punishment for cruelty to young persons. For instance, if a person who has the custody, charge or care of a young person wilfully assaults, ill-treats, neglects, abandons or exposes such young person or causes or procures or permits such young person to be assaulted, ill-treated, neglected, abandoned or exposed in a manner likely to cause such young person unnecessary suffering or injury to his health, that person shall be deemed guilty of an offence punishable by imprisonment of up to several years or to a fine, or to both imprisonment and fine.

123. In many countries, school welfare services have been organized which are responsible for the after-care of juvenile offenders detained in, or released on parole licence from, approved schools or approved homes. It is necessary to start after-care from the day of the offender's detention in the institution until his eventual reintegration into the community.

124. Experience shows that the United Nations Standard Minimum Rules (the Beijing Rules), contained in the annex to General Assembly resolution 40/33, are playing an important role in the administration of juvenile justice. In this resolution, the General Assembly invited Member States to adapt, wherever necessary, their national policies and practices to the Rules and to bring them to the attention of the relevant authorities and to public opinion. Many Governments have already taken steps to align their juvenile justice administration with the Rules. For instance, in France, the Ministry of Justice had completed a study designed to guide the course of action for translating the Rules into domestic law. France has a separate juvenile justice system, with specialized personnel and multidisciplinary counsellors. The Governments of Austria, Byelorussia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, the Netherlands, the Russian Federation, Ukraine and the United Kingdom have indicated that the Rules have been reflected in their national systems.

125. There is no doubt that the prevention of juvenile delinquency is an essential element of crime prevention in society. In March 1991, the General Assembly adopted the United Nations Guidelines for the Prevention of Juvenile Delinquency (The Riyadh Guidelines). The prevention of juvenile delinquency requires efforts on the part of the entire society to ensure the harmonious development of adolescents, and respect for and promotion of their personality from early childhood. Young persons should have an active role within society. They should not be considered as mere objects of socialization or control. The well-being of young persons should be the main purpose of any preventive programme.

10. The role of youth in the promotion and protection of the rights of victims of criminal abuses of power

126. During the period 1989-1991 the struggle of youth for freedom and democracy became decisive in some countries. At the same time, the repression of young fighters for freedom became harsher and much more cruel. Amnesty International estimates that at least 1,000 people were killed and thousands more injured in Beijing in early June 1989 when troops fired into crowds of protesters and bystanders - the vast majority of them young and unarmed. In Romania, during the December 1989 revolution and during the killing and repression in June 1990, young people suffered the most. In Myanmar, during the 1988 and 1989 repression, most of the victims were students.

127. During those tragic events, many young people were killed. Others suffered physical or mental injury, emotional suffering, economic loss or substantial impairment of their fundamental rights. In accordance with the provisions of international law, the victims should be treated with compassion and respect for their dignity. Those who are guilty of criminal abuses of power should be tried and punished in conformity with the law. Judicial and administrative mechanisms should be established or strengthened to enable victims to obtain redress through formal and informal procedures that should be expedient, fair, inexpensive and accessible.

128. Victims should receive the necessary medical, psychological, social and material assistance through governmental means. Police, justice, health, social service and other personnel concerned should receive training and guidelines to ensure the provision of appropriate and prompt aid.

129. Those States that have no adequate rules and regulations to punish such criminal actions should incorporate into their national law norms proscribing crimes and abuses of power and providing remedies to victims of such crimes and abuses. Justice should be done, in spite of the resistance of political leaders in some countries. But, as former President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the United States rightly pointed out, "the question is not only to punish such criminal abuses of power. The most important is to prevent them". And national and international law have a decisive role in this respect.

B. Serious difficulties in ensuring the exercise of youth's fundamental right to education

130. Particularly since the 1960s, a critique of educational systems has been evolving in both developed and developing countries. Some educational systems appear to be unsuitable for modern social needs. There is a wide gap between formal schooling and the world of work. Young people in many countries have emphasized the fact that while considerable progress has been achieved, educational reform has not kept pace with rapid growth.

131. Young people in developed and especially in developing countries continue to confront serious difficulties in ensuring their fundamental right to education.

1. Development of education

132. In less developed countries, in particular, schooling has often been insufficient in content and quality, with overcrowded classrooms, insufficiently trained and overworked teachers, insufficient equipment and a lack of essential support services.

133. Investment and assistance are not sufficient to create efficient school systems and support services and to endow schools with qualified personnel. It is estimated that at the present time some 878 million people can neither read nor write, as against 742 million in 1970. If current trends continue, the situation will be worse in 1995. In some countries, particularly the less developed, one young person in four is illiterate. There is no doubt that the extension of effective assistance for the eradication of illiteracy and for the promotion of education of all kinds in the developing countries, both bilaterally and through the United Nations system, has become a most important and urgent activity. Many Governments of developing countries have assigned prime importance in their programmes of social development to eradicating illiteracy.

134. The Government of China has reported that

> "in order to raise the quality of Chinese youth, the Government has launched all manner of intellectual development and self-improvement schemes among the young. According to incomplete statistics, 120 million young people have taken part in schemes of this kind, 55 million youth are resolutely studying at home and every year 3 million sit the nationwide higher education examination for correspondence and self-taught students. But, China still has over 100 million illiterates and per capita spending on education is low".

135. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport of the Republic of Namibia has reported that "an integrated, comprehensive and responsible youth development programme will reinforce and augment academic training meaningfully and responsibly, to the benefit of the country and its people".

2. Equality in treatment

136. In spite of the fact that many actions and measures have been taken against discrimination in education, it persists in some countries in the admission of boys and girls to educational institutions, in the treatment by the public authorities as between nationals, in the matter of school fees and the granting of scholarships and other forms of assistance to young people and the necessary permits and facilities for the pursuit of studies in foreign countries.

137. The Ministry of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport of the Republic of Namibia has reported that "during the pre-independence period, the policy of apartheid was progressively introduced into Namibia by the South African regime. One of the many legacies of South Africa's administration of Namibia led to institutionalized inequality in education, social welfare and labour. Black Namibians, for example, were trained from an early age to fill the low-level jobs reserved for them by the white minority. The education system catered for blacks, whites and coloured separately and, within each sector, there was further segregation between ethnic groups".

138. There is a very strong trend to eliminate any practices which involve discrimination in education, to ensure that there is no discrimination in the admission of young people to educational institutions, that there are no differences in treatment as between nationals, except on the basis of merit or need, in the matter of school fees and the granting of assistance. Many Governments have adopted effective measures to eliminate any restrictions or preferences based solely on the ground that young people belong to a particular group, and to give foreign nationals resident within their territory the same access to education as that given to their own nationals.

3. Guidelines

139. In a number of market economy countries, schools are beginning to defer the time at which a choice must be made between predominantly academic and predominantly vocational pursuits, thus maintaining flexibility and promoting the general education that is necessary for all forms of work.

140. In some planned economy countries, in response to a need to adapt to technological changes, reforms have been introduced to raise the quality of education and vocational guidance at school. In these countries, there is a concern to combine academic instruction with preparation for practical work, so that even at the primary school level students will be taught basic vocational skills.

C. Grave and numerous problems in ensuring the exercise of youth's fundamental right to work

141. An issue of far-reaching importance is youth employment and the related problems of unemployment, underemployment, health and migration. The Department of International Economic and Social Affairs of the United Nations

has underlined that during the yearly 1980s it became evident that these problems loom large, in reality as well as in the consciousness of young people. Environmental hazards, physical risk, psychological alienation, economic marginalization are frequent issues involved in the nature of work available to youth.

142. The unemployment rate of young people is still higher than of the workforce at large, even though it has fallen slightly in recent years, from 17.7 per cent in 1983 to 16 per cent in 1990 according to the latest figures. The largest declines have taken place in Australia, Canada and Norway. The rate has also fallen in Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom and the United States, where the young remain unemployed for shorter periods (4.6 months less on average) than adults who overall are more qualified. Elsewhere, and in particular in Eastern Europe, youth unemployment has risen over the last two years.

143. The Youth Forum of the United Nations System (Vienna, 1991) underlined many difficulties in developing countries in this field. In the cities and the shanty towns around them, young people work in a variety of occupational categories: sweatshop workers, self-employed artisans, street vendors, service technicians, casual wage labourers, itinerant salespersons, refuse collectors, prostitutes, beggars and the huge personal service sector.

144. In both developed and developing countries, there are many other economic activities of youth in which the young people are inadequately categorized and qualified. There are many unpaid families. Young women suffer from long-entrenched discrimination, practices and habits. They receive little or no return for their huge contribution to the economy and society, and are very often denied the same opportunities as men for training and paid employment. They are prevented from maximizing their individual development and participation in society.

145. At the same time, migrants, refugees and other young workers struggle on the margins of the labour force. Young people with disabilities are facing particular difficulties as they attempt to participate more fully in society.

1. Forced or compulsory labour

146. In some countries young people are required to perform forced or compulsory labour, whereas others have no employment. In other countries there is a very large proportion of underemployment or very low or inadequate incomes or even exploitation of youth labour.

147. The existing systems of forced or compulsory labour in some developed and, in particular, in various developing countries seriously threatens fundamental human rights and jeopardizes the freedom and status of young workers in contravention of the obligations and provisions of the Charter of the United Nations, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and other international instruments. In many cases, forced or compulsory labour is used as a means of political coercion or punishment for holding or expressing views ideologically opposed to the established political, social or

economic system. In some countries, forced or compulsory labour is used as a method of mobilizing and using labour for economic purposes or as a means of labour discipline, as punishment for having participated in strikes and as a means of racial, social, national or religious discrimination. Unfortunately, in large areas of the world young people are exploited under horrible conditions. In various developing countries, extreme poverty forces many young people into the labour market at a very early age, depriving them not only of the joys of childhood but also of any possibility of realizing their full potential as adults.

148. There are many types of such youth labour, including family farming, family craftwork, craft piecework, small tasks carried out by young people on their own account, small tasks carried out for third parties, seasonal work in agriculture, apprenticeships, sweatshops, maid-of-all-work labour in a situation of virtual bondage, youth prostitution and bond service. Many young people are unpaid family workers in household enterprises. A vast majority of youth work long hours and receive a low income, particularly in rural economies, where many young people are engaged in subsistence activities and unpaid family labour, such as repairing and maintaining dwellings and farm buildings, growing vegetables and fruit not for their own consumption, carrying water over long distances, etc. Most of these activities take up a considerable amount of time and contribute to the output and welfare of the household enterprises. Even when a boundary is drawn between the two, for young workers the practical problems of qualification remain, since these activities tend to escape the conventional measurement tools. There are many contemporary manifestations of slavery-like practices, including apartheid, colonialism, traffic in and exploitation of youth labour, debt bondage, illicit traffic in young migrant workers and exploitation of hard drug addicts. Conservative estimates would put the number of known victims of forced or compulsory labour between 1970 and 1990 at at least 14 million young people. The extent and occurrence of such labour during this period may have been even more widespread, since not all cases were reported or known.

149. Of concern are also incidents involving the illegal transportation of young workers from developing countries to some developed ones in conditions akin to slavery and forced labour, organized or undertaken by criminal elements. This raises the problem of the exploitation of youth labour through illicit and clandestine trafficking. The suggestions and recommendations made on this important matter by the Special Rapporteur of the Sub-Commission, Mrs. Halima Warzazi, should be taken into account.

2. Equality in treatment

150. In some developed countries there is discriminatory treatment of young migrant workers, despite the legislative and other efforts exerted to prevent and punish mistreatment. In many cases, young migrant workers have no regular status and are denied treatment equal to that of the nationals of the country with regard to the enjoyment of fundamental human rights, with particular reference to equality of opportunity and treatment in respect of employment and occupation, social security, trade union and cultural rights, and individual and collective freedoms. The illicit traffic in young alien

workers continues to be organized in various places. Some host countries do not have enough efficient cooperation with the countries of origin to provide young migrant workers and their families with the necessary facilities in the fields of education and information to safeguard their cultural identity. Many young migrant workers are denied education in their mother tongue and on different aspects of their cultural heritage with a view to preserving their national identity. There is also a lack of sufficient and efficient cooperation between the State of origin and the State of employment to create new job opportunities for young migrant workers returning to the State of origin.

3. Unemployment and underemployment

151. Many serious and very difficult problems are related to youth unemployment and underemployment. Since the end of the 1970s, youth unemployment in the industrialized market economies has become a much greater problem for all categories and not just for the high-risk groups at the margin of society, such as educationally disadvantaged migrants, racial minorities, disabled youth and young women. Unemployment has increased and the periods of unemployment have become much longer. The beginnings of the current youth unemployment problems in the industrialized market economies can be traced to the general slow-down of demand and economic activity in the mid-1970s, aggravated by the 1979 oil shock, followed by a global recession and by demographic factors combined with the effect of rapid structural change caused by technology and other factors and the displacement of certain industries.

152. In developing and particularly in the least developed countries, youth employment problems are part and parcel of the overall problem of poverty, unemployment and underemployment.

153. Of particular concern is the pattern developing in those countries where the employment prospects of young people, and particularly disadvantaged youth moving into their early twenties, are not improving, thus raising the spectre of a generation of young people, born in the late 1950s to mid-1960s, facing a prolonged period of adult unemployment. In more developed countries, economic recovery began in 1983, but youth employment has responded very slowly to this important event. The improvement in OECD countries in 1984 was accounted for almost entirely by a 2.7 per cent increase in youth employment in the United States. In the industrialized market and planned economies, a common phenomenon is a clearly discernible decline in population growth since the 1950s. There is a connection between this phenomenon and the future size of youth employment. It would appear that in the 1990s the teenage labour force will be smaller in most countries than in the 1960s and 1970s. Young women entering the labour force will partially offset this decline.

154. In the centrally-planned economies, in the context of shortages of manpower in some countries and the need to make efficient use of available manpower, young people are faced with certain problems of job placement. In some of these countries, effective measures for restructuring the economy have been taken. In these countries, there is concern to settle such problems as job placement, as well as the selection of an occupation that takes into account individuals' interests as well as the requirements of society.

155. Underemployment is another phenomenon facing young people in many countries. In various places, young people involuntarily work a shorter period of time than is normally associated with a particular activity and are available for or seeking additional work. These are visibly underemployed young people. In some countries, a very large proportion of underemployment is "invisible", which reflects a misallocation of labour resources or a fundamental imbalance between labour and other factors of production. Young people face such difficult problems as very low or inadequate incomes, under-utilization of their skills or capacities and low productivity.

156. Young people, particularly in their formative years, require clearly determined and defined hours and conditions, taking into account the need to limit working time in order to allow sufficient time for education, rest and leisure activities. The seventy-second International Labour Conference (1986) stressed that part-time work represents one of the opportunities available to youth employment in many countries. Such work can provide possibilities to pursue further education and training.

4. Security and safety

157. One of the basic aspirations of the vast majority of young people is to improve their access to full-time employment opportunities with fair conditions of work, career prospects and job satisfaction. It has been emphasized that meeting these important aspirations in many countries is dependent on higher and sustained rates of global economic growth so as to achieve a significant expansion in labour demand generally, taking into account that both the quantity and quality of employment opportunities for every boy and girl, and for everyone, are closely associated with the functioning of the overall economy in every country and in general in the world. There is no doubt that coordinated economic and social policies, both at the national and at the international level, which facilitate the achievement of more stable and fair commodity and financial markets and an expansion of international trade, including freer access to international markets and based on the principles of equality and mutual advantage, are essential macro-economic preconditions for the solution of existing youth unemployment problems. The social and economic cost of the problems confronting young people in today's world impose heavy burdens on both individuals and society as a whole. However, the cost of not overcoming those problems will be much higher in the long run, should effective solutions not be found.

158. The most important prerequisites for the meaningful realization of the rights of youth are independence, territorial integrity and national sovereignty, without which no effort towards economic or social development can lead to a more just society. To ensure full enjoyment by youth of the right to life, to education and to work in different countries, particularly in the less developed ones, would require necessarily peaceful but radical social changes, which would allow all the human and material resources of a nation full and dynamic participation in the process of development. Young people are an important component of every society. To stimulate their effective participation in the process of development, urgent measures of

radical reforms are required, which must be based on social justice, national consolidation and solidarity, the equitable distribution of income, wealth and services, the bringing of rural and urban income levels closer together, an increased respect for work, the removal of any kind of discrimination in fact as well as in law and the decentralization of decision-making and the system of government within the framework of an effective democratic structure. There is no doubt that rapid modernization requires that institutions make youth participation more effective.

159. In many countries, particularly in the least developed, a radical change is urgently needed in the educational system, implying not only an increase in the quantity of schooling but also an improvement in its content and in its very spirit. The creation, expansion and consolidation of links between labour and ownership in industry and the training of skilled young workers, are important components of this change. To ensure that human resources are mobilized and that the most needy elements benefit from technical cooperation projects, it is necessary to orient projects to the special requirements of university students and out-of-school youth, in order to integrate young people both as productive agents and as beneficiaries of industrial development, as well as participants in the decision-making process.

III. THE CAUSES OF THE CONTINUING VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS OF YOUTH

160. Contempt for the rights of youth, as stipulated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the other international instruments, leads to the continuing violation of these rights.

A. Political causes

161. There are three main categories of political causes of the continuing violation of the human rights of youth.

162. The first category reflects the consequences of the refusal of political leaders to know and to apply the internationally agreed standards on status of youth.

163. The second category reflects the consequences of the absence of a specific policy on youth and the constant refusal of political leaders to treat young people as the specific segment of any society that they are in fact.

164. The third category of political causes concerns the continuing repression of young fighters for freedom as a constant policy of some Governments, which consider youth the most active segment of society in the struggle for change.

B. Socio-economic causes

165. There are many social and economic causes of the continuing violation of the human rights of youth. But, the most important is the wrong structure of many communities. The division of the community into poor and rich people,

and the maintenance of economic and social inequity have serious consequences on the life of young people, who are affected first by unemployment and underemployment.

166. The promotion of such wrong structures in other and in particular in Eastern European countries has generated unexpected difficulties for young people. Today, millions and millions of young people have no jobs in those countries and the situation continues to deteriorate day-by-day. After the 1989 Revolution, youth understood that their rights and freedoms cannot be guaranteed in a society structured on the basis of inequity and injustice.

167. It is known that in former socialist countries, old forms of labour exploitation have been replaced by new ones, dominated by the element of oppression; but the slogans and concepts launching them are picked up and repeated with great complacency by loafers and shirkers. People have been robbed of the joy of working to improve their standard of living: a better life can no longer be attained through diligence.

168. Some rulers are trying today to turn back to the old forms of labour exploitation in those countries. But, action taken in this direction has generated confusion and disappointment. Young people from many Eastern European countries paid for their freedom in blood. They fought not for the turning back to old forms of labour exploitation, but for new really equitable economic structures in their societies.

169. There continue to exist countries where the impoverishment of the population and the threat to the life of the young are due exclusively to the irresponsible attitude of certain rulers, whose voluntarist methods have led the economy to the brink of disaster. The acute shortage of basic foodstuffs has placed the genetically determined development of those to be born at risk, thus threatening the human race with degeneration.

170. There are countries in which the difficulties of providing the basic foodstuffs needed by the younger generation are of an objective nature: the soil is poor, large areas lie in arid zones, population density is very high. These countries must be given the appropriate types of assistance by the international community so that people can be assured of survival and the young can develop normally.

C. Malnutrition, illiteracy, poor education, unemployment - the main causes of youth criminality

171. Youth is the sole component of society which is deprived of any direct representation of its interests. A social policy for youth is necessarily a "filtered" policy, an asymmetric one, in which there is no dialectical confrontation between the concerned parties.

172. In some countries, young people continue to be confronted with many obstacles in the administration of justice. Many tribunals are not independent and impartial. In other countries, young people are subject to arbitrary interference with their privacy, family, home, correspondence and telephone.

173. There is evidence of the adverse and irreversible effects of legal interventions and sanctions in the early stage of human development. There are an increasing number of young people who are coming into conflict with the judicial system.

174. Studies carried out by some Governments reveal a number of specific social and economic determinants of young criminality. Bad living conditions, malnutrition, illiteracy, poor education, unemployment make young people vulnerable to becoming involved in criminal activity. All studies carried out at the national and international level show that economic and social constraints are responsible for the inability of the family and the community to provide youth with an adequate structure.

175. Recent studies indicate that violent youth offenders come from deprived urban areas. Known as "street children", they are exposed to violence, and are frequently drop-outs from school, family and work; their primary socialization from the family is inadequate. In many cases, the violence becomes partly an expression of protest. Street robbery, "mugging", sex crimes, school violence and vandalism have the same social and economic determinants in both developed and developing countries. But, many studies underline that this violence occurs at the bottom of the socio-economic pyramid, particularly wide in developing countries.

176. There is evidence that young women are subject to differential measures which imply discrimination. In many countries such phenomena as running away from home are treated as contraventions and punished quite harshly.

177. Evidence of the socio-economic causes of youth delinquency is the fact that the largest part of recorded youth crimes appear to consist of property crime.

IV. PROGRAMME OF ACTION FOR ENSURING AND PROMOTING THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF THE YOUNGER GENERATION

178. Young people find themselves living in a society which does not make enough effort to resolve the problems with which they are confronted.

179. Taking into account the complexity of these problems, a programme of action for ensuring and promoting the rights and freedoms of youth is absolutely necessary.

180. The rights and fundamental freedoms of young people can be guaranteed only if economic and social inequities, oppression and police terror are eliminated forever, political and economic systems restructured where necessary and, everywhere in the world, real justice and respect for human beings, without distinction of any kind, established.

181. Economic and social equity, economic and political pluralism and the separation of the legislative, judicial and executive powers, and the free election of political leaders are the most important components of a real democracy and the preconditions for the promotion of and respect for human rights and for the normal development of our children, the future of mankind.

182. It is imperative to take urgent measures for the protection of the life of young people everywhere in the world. It is a duty of all national bodies and of the international community to guarantee them a decent present and a bright future.

A. Measures to be taken at the family level

183. The family constitutes the basic unit of society. In spite of many changes in society, the family continues to provide the emotional, financial and material support essential to the growth and development of infants and children. The family is a vital means of preserving and transmitting cultural values. It has an important responsibility for education, training and support.

184. The family invests much in the future growth of its young members. It is a vital resource for development. At the same time, there are many cases in which family expectations and commitments are expressed in the context of unequal family relationship. In these cases, the individual initiative, education and personal development of young members are hindered.

185. As experience has shown, poor families are exposed to forces driving them apart, resulting in migration of its young members and in growing numbers of street children and homeless young persons.

186. For these reasons, measures should be taken for: (a) providing adequate educational opportunities; (b) expanding employment opportunities to provide the basis for family life, as well as for family life education; (c) the socialization of young people and facilitating their transition from adolescence to responsible adulthood and to the world of work; (d) the prevention of crime and youth delinquency. It is widely observed that drug and alcohol abuse arise from and result in a disintegrated family life. Efforts should be made in order to achieve a greater measure of prevention and rehabilitation of young victims within the family. To this end, it is necessary to provide assistance and information to families, to encourage prevention of violence in the home and of delinquency, crime, drug and alcohol abuse, and of irresponsible sexuality and the spread of diseases, especially the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome.

B. Measures to be taken at the national level

187. Every Government should take the appropriate measures to review, update and improve, where necessary, national legislation concerning youth in conformity with international standards.

188. Governments should promote racial and religious tolerance. It is necessary to repeal, where they exist, those legislative provisions which are aimed at the separate development of youth based on racial, religious or any other form of discrimination.

189. All national organizations should encourage the participation of youth in the life of the community.

1. For the protection of the life of young people

190. Taking into account the increasing number of summary executions and arbitrary executions of young people in different parts of the world, every Government should ensure the most careful legal procedures and the greatest possible safeguards to the young accused in capital cases in countries where the death penalty obtains. All States parties have a duty to respect as a minimum standard the provisions of articles 16, 14 and 15 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and, where necessary, to review their legal rules and practices, so as to guarantee the greatest possible safeguards for the accused in capital cases. Persons under 18 years of age at the time of the commission of the crime shall not be sentenced to death. Anyone sentenced to death shall have the right to appeal to a court of higher jurisdiction. Anyone sentenced to death shall have the right to seek pardon, or commutation of sentence. Capital punishment shall not be carried out pending any appeal or other recourse procedure or other proceeding relating to pardon or commutation of the sentence.

191. In order to ensure the greatest possible safeguards for the young accused in capital cases, the Governments should review the machinery for investigation of death under suspicious circumstances and the trial procedures of tribunals, including those of special tribunals. To this end, it is exceptionally important to train all law enforcement personnel and inculcate in them the respect for life.

192. Having in mind that many young people have been involved in the commission of terrorist acts, it is necessary that every State fulfil its obligations under international law to refrain from organizing, instigating, assisting or participating in terrorist acts in other States, or acquiescing in activities within their territory directed towards the commission of such acts. All States should take urgent measures to contribute to the elimination of the causes underlying international terrorism and to pay special attention to such situations as colonialism, racism, those involving mass and flagrant violations of human rights and fundamental freedoms and those involving alien domination and occupation.

193. In order to protect the life of the younger generation, Governments have the duty to make every effort to provide adequate medical care for all children and adolescents. The banning of imports of essential medicines and drugs, with the resultant risk to the lives of the newborn, of growing children, of young people and their parents, is a measure that can only be qualified as criminal.

194. Placing on sale drugs and medicines whose date of validity has expired for the sole purpose of disposing of accumulated stocks is outrageous from both the moral and the legal point of view. The premeditated nature of this illegality is demonstrated by the fact that in some countries the administrators of the health services have taken steps to stop stamping an expiry date on the wrappings of medical products.

2. For a radical change in the educational system

195. A radical change in the educational system can be realized by ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of education through regular, ongoing curriculum development. Language, customs and traditions should be everywhere an integral part of the basic learning. Youth must have an adequate input in the educational decision-making process. Education should assist young people to develop individual autonomy and to participate in shaping their own reality.

196. There are various tools and strategies to develop human resources, e.g. behavioural-science techniques, organization development, performance engineering, which are being used in ad hoc and piecemeal ways, mainly through short-term formal training courses. It is important to develop corporate environments and networks of supportive structures that help to facilitate the application of newly acquired or enhanced knowledge and capacities. Diverse and marketable skills should be developed through youth training and apprenticeships. The dramatic effects of new technologies in the workplace must be examined, so that they can operate effectively in the changing work environment. Through these actions it is important to ensure that the younger generations will be able to compete for meaningful jobs and serve as a well-trained, dependable labour force in different sectors.

197. For young people, full implementation of the right to universal education must be ensured through free and compulsory primary education, universal and gradually free-of-charge secondary education, equal access to all educational facilities and the access of the younger generation to science and culture.

198. There has been evidence of some democratic transformation in terms of the volume of educational systems, but this has not always been accompanied by a corresponding transformation of quality in the ways in which knowledge is transmitted. On the basis of a study made by the Centre for Social Development on Humanitarian Affairs of the United Nations, as more and more young people acquire the requisite qualifications for jobs, the number of these jobs does not increase proportionately. Young people who have recently acquired some degree of education are pushed out of the job market by others who have a higher education. For this reason, they must shift to occupations of a lower rank.

199. Appropriate measures should be taken in order to encourage the elaboration and implementation of educational policies and plans with a view to ensuring equality of opportunity and treatment in education and to relating education to economic and social development. To this end, it is important to establish quantitative and qualitative objectives for the training of the qualified senior staff needed to help young people progressively to improve their educational credentials.

200. Important measures should be taken for educating youth in respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. All means of education should be employed so that youth grows up and develops in a spirit of respect for the human dignity and equal rights of all men and all peoples without discrimination. It will be necessary to take measures to prepare young people

for social life, to stimulate their interest in the problems and aspirations of a changing world, to secure for them an ever-growing and active share in the life and development of society, and to teach them to appreciate human values and to understand other people, for the promotion of the moral and spiritual health of society.

201. The educational process promotes the broad dissemination of ideas and knowledge, as an essential prerequisite for enhancing respect for the dignity of man and the variety of human culture.

3. The full enjoyment by youth of the right to work

202. To ensure full enjoyment by youth of the right to work, public leaders must create a sound employment policy, leading to a better transition from school to work and recognizing the importance of social and human considerations as well as economic goals. The stamping out of corruption and the creation of more social discipline throughout society are essential for faster economic and social development. It is necessary to stress that, without a sufficient core of well-qualified, dedicated and honest administrators, the realization of the right to work of young people will be delayed. The exercise of social discipline and the participation of young people in all walks of life are very important in implementing economic and social programmes aimed at speeding up the enjoyment by youth of the right to work.

203. During training and during the time when earnings are low because of the necessity to continue studies or to work part-time, subsidies should be given to young people for room and board and, if necessary, for child-care and other expenses. A sound employment policy aims to support the effective integration of young people in the economic process. This policy will enable young people, within institutional infrastructures, to become and remain responsive to organizational goals, innovative and desirable changes. Young people should have better access to financial resources and other institutional facilities for the improvement of their participation in economic operations. Motivation seminars, behavioural modification workshops and workshops intended to enhance skills need to be followed up by well-designed action plans and support systems. These measures should be coordinated to ensure quality in initial youth training, access to paid employment, and the possibility for proficiency courses during employment.

204. In many countries there is a large proportion of youth unemployment. Young people are by definition in a period of change, as they move from the end of childhood towards entry into the world of work. There are, at the same time, other forms of change, resulting particularly from migration and assimilation into new sectors. Young migrants and refugees, the rural and urban poor, disabled youth and young women are, very often, marginalized. Most of them live and work in unregulated employment conditions. Their situation is closely linked to the problems of extending social protection to workers in this sector, which is a significant grey area in most developing countries.

205. For young people, the problems encountered in the unregulated sector tend to be those of underemployment, poverty and lack of social protection. Policy makers are faced with the need to reduce the hardships and frequently exploitative conditions suffered by unprotected workers, particularly youth and children, while recognizing the positive contribution of this sector to employment creation.

206. Any policy in this field has to take due account of the stage and level of economic development and the mutual relationships between employment objectives and other economic and social objectives, and has to be pursued by methods that are appropriate to national condition and practices.

207. It is well known that agricultural production and non-farm agriculturally-related employment provides over 80 per cent of job opportunities in many developing countries. On the basis of analysis made by the Centre for Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs, for the foreseeable future more than half of the population of the developing world will continue to be rural. That is why youth should be involved in learning improved agricultural principles and practices. Measures should be taken for the improvement of educational opportunities in rural areas. In this way it will be possible for rural youth to decide to stay in their communities and to participate actively in rural development.

208. Given the differences in economic growth between more developed and less developed countries, it is necessary to restructure economic, monetary and social policies at the national and international levels in order to reduce disparities between developed and developing countries, and to use in a better way resources for youth development.

209. It is necessary to consider the needs of young people as a group in society with full rights; the rights and specific needs of each member of the group must be taken into consideration by public administrators and the community. Bold efforts have to be made to convert mentalities and thus to mobilize new energies to ensure expansion of the individual and of the community.

C. Measures to be taken at the regional level

210. The Guidelines for further planning and suitable follow-up in the field of youth endorsed by the General Assembly at its fortieth session emphasized that regional action should primarily be supportive of and complementary to national action and involve youth participation.

211. At the regional level it would be useful to disseminate information relating to youth and to facilitate the sharing of experience between countries of the region. For example, after the 1989 Revolution in the countries of Eastern Europe, the sharing of experience between them has become very important. In these countries, young people played an active and sometimes exceptional role in obtaining real change. They gained, almost everywhere, their political rights and freedoms. This was one of the most significant steps forward in the efforts of these people to build a society of

democracy and freedom. In some countries of the region, like Romania, these rights and freedoms were stipulated and are guaranteed in a new Constitution. At the same time, these countries are trying to promote and guarantee economic, social and cultural rights. But in the process of implementing economic reforms they are confronting many difficulties, like inflation, unemployment, economic inequities etc. Taking into account the experience gained during this period, some countries, like Poland, have revised their initial vision on the economic reforms. Other countries, like Romania, are continuing the so-called shock therapy. Through such action, poor people become poorer and rich people become richer. Youth suffers first. Many young people have no job. They are leaving the country to find a better future abroad. If their political rights and freedoms are already guaranteed, the economic and social rights of youth in these countries have to be co-related much better with international rules and standards.

212. At the regional level it is advisable to enhance the effectiveness of cooperation and to promote better working relations between regional youth organizations. Specific regional projects could also be developed, at the request of Governments, in order to improve training and to enhance the abilities of youth workers and young managers.

D. Measures to be taken at the international level

213. The international institutes and organizations have to continue their action with a view to facilitating the exchange of information and documentation. They should stimulate international cooperation in the field of youth.

214. Dissemination and exchange of information should sustain public awareness of youth issues. These issues should continue to be discussed in existing intergovernmental bodies.

215. Appropriate international instruments should be prepared by the competent United Nations bodies and specialized agencies.

216. Non-governmental youth and youth-related organizations should improve and strengthen their efforts to sensitize the general public to youth issues through their programmes. Individually or jointly, they should undertake analyses of the situation of youth, in order to identify the areas where activities could be developed.

217. The United Nations and non-governmental organizations should improve the channels of communication between them and youth organizations.

218. All measures taken at the family level, at the national community level and at the regional and international levels should encourage the promotion of the rights and freedoms of youth everywhere in the world. Respect for and application of those rights and freedoms should be guaranteed by appropriate legal instruments.

V. CHARTER OF THE RIGHTS AND FREEDOMS OF YOUTH

219. Every young man and woman has the right to liberty and security of his/her person. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest or detention. No one shall be deprived of liberty except on such grounds and in accordance with such procedures as are established by law, and in conformity with established international principles and standards.

220. All persons deprived of their liberty shall be treated with humanity and with respect for the inherent dignity of the human person.

221. Anyone who has been the victim of unlawful arrest or detention shall have an enforceable right to compensation.

222. Young people have a right to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health. Absence of the basic means of subsistence has grave consequences for the physical and mental development of the youth who cannot develop as normal and healthy individuals able to contribute to the improvement of their political, social and economic conditions.

223. In no case may a person be deprived of his means of subsistence. No one has the right to send abroad basic foodstuffs and nutrients through export transactions or other forms of trade, transfer or donation, before the elementary means of subsistence are ensured for the normal development of children, young people and all citizens of one's own country. Basic foodstuffs and nutrients necessary for subsistence and the normal development of children, young people and all citizens should be reserved and conserved principally for the citizens of the country.

224. Young people have the right to education. The education of young people shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and the sense of personal dignity, and shall strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

225. Education shall enable young people to participate effectively in a free society, promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations and all racial, ethnic or religious groups, and further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace.

226. Parents have the right a priori to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

227. The development of an educational system at all levels shall be actively pursued, an adequate fellowship system shall be established, and the material conditions of teaching staff shall be continuously improved.

228. Young people have the right to the free movement of ideas and to free contacts, without any restrictions, with other young people throughout the world.

229. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to it.

230. Young people have the right to free access, without any restrictions, to the fundamental assets of universal science, art and culture, past and present.

231. Young people have the right to take part in cultural life, to enjoy the benefits of scientific progress and the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary or artistic production of which they are the authors.

232. All States shall undertake to respect the freedom indispensable for scientific research and the creative activity of youth.

233. All States recognize the benefits to be derived from the encouragement and development of free international contacts and cooperation in the scientific and cultural fields.

234. Whoever opposes these fundamental freedoms is opposed to the generous idea of understanding among peoples, the only lasting guarantee of peace.

235. Young people have the right to just and favourable conditions of work and to protection against unemployment.

236. Every State shall safeguard the right of young people to work, and to gain their living through work which is freely chosen or accepted.

237. Young people, without any discrimination, have the right to equal pay for equal work. Every young man and young woman has the right to just and favourable remuneration ensuring for himself or herself and his/her family an existence in conditions of human dignity, supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection.

238. No one shall be required to perform forced or compulsory labour. Children and young persons should be protected from economic and social exploitation. Their employment in occupations dangerous to morals, health or life, or likely to hamper their normal development, should be punishable by law. All States should set age-limits below which the paid employment of child labour should be prohibited and punishable by law.

239. Young people have the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of their interests.

240. Young people have the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitations of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

241. Young people have the right to own property individually as well as in association with others. Social and individual forms of property for young people shall be guaranteed. No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property. No one can dispose at will of the social and private property of the citizens of a country.

242. All young people have the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

243. Young people have the right to fair and comprehensive knowledge of the history of their nation. For the younger generations, accurate information concerning their country's history is a guarantee of continuity and further development.

244. To this end, the protection and preservation of historical monuments and remains, including religious ones, is a sacred duty of the authorities and of all citizens. The destruction of a country's spiritual heritage, including religious monuments, is a sacrilege, a profanation, and those guilty of such destruction shall be severely punished.

245. Young people have a right to real democracy. No one has the right to falsify existing democratic forms and to use them for personal advantage or for political or other reasons, thus projecting a distorted picture of democracy in the minds of young people.

246. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression. This right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

247. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of these rights other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary to ensure respect for the rights or reputations of others and the protection of public health or morals.

248. Young people have the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association, including the right to form and join trade unions for the protection of their interests. No restrictions may be placed on the exercise of this right other than those imposed in conformity with the law and which are necessary in a democratic society.

249. No one shall be compelled to belong to an association.

250. Young people have the right, and should have the opportunity, without any distinction of any kind, to have access, on general terms of equality, to public service in their country.

251. Every young man and woman shall have the right to take part in the government of his/her country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. The will of the young people shall be taken into account.

252. The authority of every Government shall be based only on the will of the people. This will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections by universal suffrage and secret ballot or by equivalent free voting procedures.

253. Young people shall enjoy full equality of rights, without discrimination of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political and other opinion, national and social origin, property, birth or other status.

254. All persons are equal before the law and are entitled without any discriminaton to the equal protection of the law. Discrimination in any form shall be prohibited.

255. Young people have the right to recognition everywhere as persons before the law. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary or unlawful interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to unlawful attacks on his honour or reputation.

256. In those States in which ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities exist, persons belonging to such minorities shall have the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practise their own religion, and to use their own language.

257. Young people have the right to have or to adopt a religion or belief of their choice, and to the freedom, either individually or in community with others, in public or private, to manifest their religion or belief in worship, observance, practice and teaching. No one shall be subjected to coercion which would impair his freedom to have or to adopt a religion or belief of his choice.

258. All States shall undertake to respect the liberty of parents and, when applicable, legal guardians to ensure the religious and moral education of their children in conformity with their own convictions.

259. Every child has the right to acquire a nationality. Every child shall be registered immediately after birth and shall have a name.

260. Young people have the right to a happy future. The younger generations have the right to fight for a society of equality in wealth, not in misery. The full realization of this right shall include technical and vocational guidance and training programmes, policies and techniques to achieve steady economic, social and cultural development and full and productive employment under conditions safeguarding fundamental political and economic freedom to every young man and woman.

261. Young people have the right and the duty to demand appropriate political, economic and social reforms.

262. Young people have the right to justice, achieved with fairness, on the basis of the truth and only the truth. In each case of juvenile delinquency, the procedure shall be such as will take account of the young person's age and the desirability of promoting his rehabilitation. No one has the right to defy the noble principles of truth and fairness in the achievement of justice.

263. For the younger generations, to lose trust in the fairness of justice means to lose trust in such sacred values as life in freedom and dignity, friendship and understanding among the peoples of the world.

VI. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. Conclusions

264. Developments in the contemporary world convincingly demonstrate that young people have a more and more important role to play in attaining the objectives of progress and development set by all peoples. Their right to life, to education and to work and their freedoms are of particular importance and significance.

265. Consideration of these rights and freedoms in a special report is a mark of the real interest taken by the United Nations in alerting Governments and world public opinion and in giving impetus to concern already felt in this respect.

266. Millions of young people continue to be exposed to great harm caused by lack of the resources needed for their normal physical and intellectual development. Many young people gain an education by great efforts, and when the teaching process is over they are disappointed not to find jobs in which to apply their knowledge, talent and characteristic enthusiasm. In some countries, the process of instruction and education is passing through an especially critical period owing to the absence of professionalism and the presence of a superfluity of doctrinaire, politicizing elements of no practical utility. The jobs young people obtain in those countries do not allow their skills to be encouraged or use to be made of their intelligence and energy, so that they lapse into indifference and uniformity.

267. There are countries in which the lives of many young people are in jeopardy. The absence of the most elementary rights and freedoms, and the arrest, conviction and execution of young people on political grounds, bring to mind the darkest years of oppression. Threats of every kind, daily dangers directed against young people who have the courage to express critical opinions, maintain an atmosphere of tension and terror that is hard to bear.

268. The positive changes of recent years have rekindled the torch of freedom and dignity. The hopes of millions upon millions of young people for the elimination of repressive anachronisms and the possibility of a real restructuring of society on the principles of democracy and freedom have been reborn.

269. "No" is being said, with increasing determination, to policies of economic, cultural, ethnic and religious discrimination. The final elimination of ethnic and social genocide are priority objectives of the reinstatement of right and justice in human society.

270. The experiences of the past few decades have furnished compelling proof of the importance attached to economic and political pluralism and diversity of opinion as prerequisites for effective progress in all spheres and as the expression of the level of culture and civilization attained in the development of human communities.

271. The young generation insistently demands the abandonment of outdated doctrines, the elimination of actual economic and social structures, based on inequity and injustice.

272. Youth is the fiercest fighter for the rebuilding of the world on criteria of progress, well-being, democracy, equity and justice.

273. Orders based on terror, inequity and injustice are repudiated and condemned by history.

274. A new age of human dignity can be glimpsed on the horizon. We are quickly drawing closer to giving back to young people the confidence they need in order to build a better world, based on equity and justice.

B. Recommendations

275. Recognizing that young people have an important role to play in society for the achievement of social justice and the attainment of the objectives of economic and social progress and the maintenance of international peace and security, and mindful of the grave political, economic, social and cultural problems facing youth and the need to ensure the full exercise of youth's fundamental right to life, education, vocational training, work, social assistance and the elimination of all forms of social and racial discrimination, so that youth can participate actively in the decision-making process, we consider the following necessary:

(a) At the national and international levels, effective measures should be taken to put an immediate end to the flagrant violations of the fundamental right to life of young people. The right to life is sacrosanct. Deprivation of life is irrevocable. Respect for the right to life transcends all social, national, racial, political, religious, ethnic and other differences. Summary or arbitrary executions of young people opposed to, or perceived or imagined to be opposed to those who wield political or economic power in the State or government, or perceived to be opposed to certain aspects of their political, economic, social and cultural policies, as well as enforced or involuntary disappearances, torture and mistreatment of prisoners and detainees, are continuing on a large scale throughout the international community. These flagrant violations of the fundamental right to life of young people show a serious erosion in the level of acknowledgement of and respect for the right to life of young people.

(b) The international community must, as a matter of extreme urgency, act collectively to halt this erosion by adopting effective measures and means through which to react speedily to threatened or imminent summary or arbitrary executions, enforced or involuntary disappearances.

(c) All States should adopt effective measures for a healthier environment of young people and the containment and reduction of such afflictions as disease, famine, war, corruption, criminality and social breakdown.

(d) All States should attack on a priority basis every aspect of the illicit drug enterprise, including the production, possession, marketing, trafficking, distribution, demand, consumption, and financing of illicit drugs, which must be recognized as a crime against humanity, and launch objective informational, educational and orientation programmes to make young people appreciate the risks to health, security and other implications of illicit drug use, thus eliminating the demand for illicit drugs.

(e) At the national and international levels, effective measures should be taken for the elimination of illiteracy and for the promotion of education and vocational training for youth based upon both formal and informal learning and designed to link theoretical learning and practical training, on the one hand, with productive and creative work on the other.

(f) Young people shall be brought up in a spirit of peace, justice, freedom, mutual respect and understanding, and non-violent conflict resolution in order to promote equal rights for all human beings and all nations, economic and social progress, and the maintenance of international peace and security. All means of education, including as of major importance the guidance given by parents or family, instruction and information intended for young people should foster the ideals which help to bring peoples closer together, and acquaint young people with the role entrusted to the United Nations as a means of preserving and maintaining peace and promoting international understanding and cooperation.

(g) Young people should be brought up in the knowledge of the dignity and equality of all men, without distinction as to race, colour, ethnic origins or beliefs, and in respect for fundamental rights and for the right of peoples to self-determination. All States shall take the necessary measures, including legislative measures, to ensure that the utilization of scientific and technological achievements promotes the fullest realization of rights and fundamental freedoms of young people without any discrimination whatsoever on grounds of race, sex, language or religious beliefs.

(h) All States should take the necessary measures to implement large-scale national employment programmes, in conformity with the actual situation and priorities of every country, which would include legislative, educational, economic and social measures designed to eliminate all forms of discrimination, guarantee that young people participate actively in economic and social development and in the process of drawing up and taking decisions, and encourage adequate representation of youth in Parliament, in government, and in other decision-making bodies. All Governments shall take every possible step to ensure appropriate education and employment opportunities for children of refugees, foreign nationals and peoples displaced from their country of origin.

(i) All States should take the necessary measures to ensure that, in the pursuit of balanced economic growth, industrialization and highest productivity, the application of new technologies will enhance the situation of young people in order to provide them with a productive, satisfying and

secure future. All Governments shall give special attention to the problem of rapid demographic growth, especially in developing countries, and give high priority to achieving an apprioriate relationship between resources, productivity, population levels and population distribution.

(j) Taking into account the fact that the relatively weak position of young workers in the labour market may at times render them vulnerable to exploitation and may oblige them to accept substandard wages and jobs, Governments, employers and workers should take action when necessary to prevent these situations from arising. Working conditions should be such as not to discriminate between various categories of workers. It should be recognized, at the same time, that young people in their formative years require clearly determined and defined hours and conditions, taking into account the need to limit working time in order to allow for sufficient time for education, rest and leisure activities. This policy is to aim at ensuring the fullest possible opportunity for each young worker to qualify for, and to use his skills and endowments in, a job for which he is well suited.

(k) At the national and international levels, encouragement and facilities should be given for exchanges, travel, tourism, meetings, the study of foreign languages, the twinning of towns and universities without discrimination and similar activities, to be organized for young people of all countries in order to bring them together in educational, cultural and sporting activities in a spirit of mutual respect, understanding and cooperation.

(l) All States, the United Nations, the specialized agencies, international intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations, as well as youth organizations, shall stimulate debates and convene seminars and conferences which could serve to consolidate and mobilize efforts to promote the best educational, professional and living conditions for young people, to ensure their active participation in the overall development of society and to encourage the preparation of new local, national and international programmes in accordance with the ideals of peace, security, justice and dignity of human person.

276. Taking into account the fact that massive and flagrant violations of the rights and fundamental freedoms of young people and, in general, of every human being are continuing on a large scale throughout the international community, on the grounds that the individuals concerned are in opposition to, or are perceived or imagined to be in opposition to, those who wield political, economic, or social power in the State or government, or to certain aspects of their political, economic, social or cultural policies, and because life, liberty, justice, well-being and the dignity of the human person, human rights and fundamental freedoms, are universally recognized values transcending all social, national, racial, political, religious, ethnic and other differences, the international community must, as a matter of extreme urgency, act collectively to halt such massive and flagrant violations of the rights and fundamental freedoms of young people and, in general, of every human being, by adopting effective means such as setting up a mechanism that will

react speedily to threatened or imminent flagrant violations of human rights. This mechanism should monitor this phenomenon and suggest ways and means of eliminating it altogether. High priority should be given to the preventive measures and the involvement of Governments in this process.

277. Words of deploration and condemnation are by far not enough. Young people have asked us to give them real guarantees that massive and flagrant violations of human rights will be eliminated forever.

278. There are no international rules or principles that could be invoked by those who are violating human rights and fundamental freedoms. No one who really respects life, liberty and the dignity of human beings could ever oppose such urgent measures.

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